

## 2013 Harvest Report Indicates High Quality US Corn Ready to Market

Written by Marri Carrow

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Record production, high quality, and minor weather-related impacts are the top-line findings of the 2013/2014 Corn Harvest Quality Report, released today by the U.S. Grains Council.

“After a record drought last year, the world has been watching intently the 2013 U.S. corn crop,” said USGC President and CEO Tom Sleight. “Production has rebounded, and quality is high despite some weather challenges. It’s good news all around.”

Total U.S. corn production of 13,989 million bushels (355.3 million metric tons) is an all-time record, and the average yield of 160.4 bushels/acre (10.1 tons/hectare) is the second highest on record. Weather was again the challenge, as a cold and wet spring delayed planting across much of the corn belt. Some areas also experienced flash-drought conditions in mid-summer, although this was generally offset by cooler temperatures.

These weather adversities slightly reduced planted acreage and yield, while harvest quality remained very high. As compared to prior years, weather related impacts were modest and predictable. Aflatoxins were significantly lower than in the 2012 crop, with 99.4 percent of the samples testing below the FDA aflatoxin action level of 20 parts per billion. Starch content was up, while protein content, which is inversely related to starch, was down slightly. Oil content was similar to 2011 and 2012. Moisture content, reflecting weather conditions, was slightly higher, as were stress cracks, but total damage levels remained very low, comparable to 2012 and below 2011 levels. Average test weight remained well above the limit for No. 1 grade corn, indicating overall good quality.

“The report compares a wide range of quality factors across time,” Sleight noted, “and after the rollercoaster ride last year, the message in 2013 was that there were no surprises. A few test factors ticked up, others ticked down, consistent with weather conditions, while overall quality at harvest was very high. With record production, this is certainly a good news report.”

Corn quality will be affected by further handling, so the Council annually publishes a second

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report, the Corn Export Quality Report, which assesses quality at the point of loading for international shipment. The 2013/2014 Export Quality Report will be published in March 2014.

The two reports, utilizing consistent methodology to permit the assessment of trends over time, are intended to provide reliable, timely, and transparent information on the quality of U.S. corn as it moves through export channels.

“The takeaway message this year is that the United States has abundant supplies of high quality corn,” Sleight said. “We would remind buyers that they will get the quality level that they contract for, but with record production and good quality, it is a buyers’ market as we head into 2014.”

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*The U.S. Grains Council is a private, non-profit partnership of farmers and agribusinesses committed to building and expanding international markets for U.S. barley, corn, grain sorghum and their products. The Council is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has nine international offices that oversee programs in more than 50 countries. Financial support from our private industry members, including state checkoffs, agribusinesses, state entities and others, triggers federal matching funds from the USDA resulting in a combined program value of more than \$26.5 million.*

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